United Nations A/C.2/64/SR.6

General Assembly

Sixty-fourth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
20 October 2009

Original: English

Second Committee

Summary record of the 6th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 7 October 2009, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Mr. Park In-kook ..... (Republic of Korea)
later: Mr. Mohamed Cherif Diallo (Vice-Chairperson) ..... (Guinea)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

General debate (*continued*)

1. **Mr. Sow** (Guinea) said that the countries which were least responsible for triggering the economic crisis had been the hardest hit. Despite the fact that Africa remained somewhat outside the world economy, it had not been spared, experiencing setbacks in economic growth, agricultural development, the elimination of poverty and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

2. In Guinea, the mining industry, a major source of revenue for the State, had been particularly affected. That had led to a drop in local banks' foreign currency holdings. Companies which subcontracted with the mining industry had also seen their activity go down. Nonetheless, inflation was under control, and gross domestic product (GDP) had increased.

3. In the difficult economic conditions, the developed countries must fulfil their commitments under the Monterrey Consensus, the Doha Declaration and other agreements. It was hoped that commitments made by the Group of Twenty (G-20) to mitigate the impact of the crisis on the most vulnerable would be rapidly implemented. The Bretton Woods institutions should be reformed to provide fairer representation for poor countries. A relaunched Doha Round should strengthen preferential market access for goods produced in developing countries.

4. Headway had been made in applying the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative. Donors should work to make the Initiative a reality through more flexible conditions and stronger national and international capacities. South-South cooperation was proving to have tremendous potential.

5. Climate change was assuming greater importance on the international agenda. Guinea, with its many rivers and rich biodiversity, occupied a central place in policy-making for sustainable development and ecological balance in West Africa. It was important that the upcoming United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen should meet the expectations of a world increasingly concerned about environmental degradation.

6. **Ms. Blum** (Colombia) said that the cross-cutting nature of development issues had led to duplication with other decision-making bodies at the international level. The Committee mandate should complement work done elsewhere.

7. Colombia had advanced significantly in the Human Development Index ranking. Promotion by the Government of socially responsible investment and entrepreneurship had been instrumental. Poverty indicators were down, while tourism had grown by 9.5 per cent during the current year. However, there were fears of a new wave of protectionism. Market access was central not only to economic recovery, but also to the correction of the imbalances that had affected, for example, global food production and the stability of commodity prices.

8. Even though Colombia was a minor carbon emitter, it made an important contribution to combating climate change by maintaining large tracts of forest and generating clean energy. Hydropower represented 87 per cent of the energy generated in the country. At the same time, Colombia was extremely vulnerable to climate-related natural disasters and trusted that the Second Committee would send a clear message, based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, to the Copenhagen Conference emphasizing the urgency of participants' reaching a comprehensive agreement containing ambitious mitigation commitments by developed countries and taking account of the need for flexible schemes to recognize the efforts of developing countries.

9. **Mr. Torrington** (Guyana) said that vulnerable economies were feeling the full effect of the economic crisis. Guyana, for example, was experiencing shrinking demand for its exports, higher cost of capital, scarcer foreign direct investment, fewer tourists and declining migrant remittances. Even as long-term solutions were sought, immediate relief was clearly needed for countries with limited capacity to respond. In particular, debt relief should be provided to middle-income countries with small, vulnerable economies.

10. Guyana, with its rainforest, was ready to provide services vital to the health of the planet, if the right market-based economic incentives were created, its sovereignty over the forest was not sacrificed and its legitimate development aspirations were not restricted. Funding for forest preservation must outcompete other legitimate alternative uses of forests. Prevention of tropical deforestation was the most cost-effective abatement solution available, but there was almost no capital flowing for that purpose. The agreement

reached in Copenhagen must take account of the importance of forests.

11. Given that 70 per cent of the population of Guyana was employed directly or indirectly in agriculture and related activities, and that agriculture was a major component of GDP, the renewed focus on agriculture and food security in the work of the Committee was welcome. The food crisis of 2008 had demonstrated the centrality of agriculture to the pursuit of sustainable development.

12. **Mr. Jomaa** (Tunisia), speaking on behalf of the African Group, said that failure to fulfil all the commitments made to address poverty in Africa was not due to a lack of resources. Expenditures on arms had increased during the financial crisis, and trillions of dollars had been spent on bail-out packages across the developed world. Yet the target of doubling aid to Africa by 2010 was not being met. The African Group called upon developed countries to fully implement all the outcomes of the major conferences and summits through increased aid, full debt relief, facilitated technology transfer and improved access to their markets for African exports.

13. The financial crisis had worsened food insecurity in Africa, and food insecurity had been exacerbated by the decline in food aid. While over 12 billion United States dollars in food aid had been pledged in June 2008, a mere one billion of that amount had been disbursed by the following February. According to the World Bank, the crisis would drive an additional 27 million people in Africa into poverty, have a negative impact on health and education and lead to increased unemployment. The appeal made to donor countries by the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs to step up debt relief, maintain official development assistance (ODA) and ensure stable resource flows had the full support of the African Group. The Second Committee should give greater attention to unemployment and health issues, including non-communicable diseases.

14. Climate change was causing sea and temperature levels to rise in Africa and was triggering water scarcity. It could lead to large population movements and spark conflicts. The agreement reached in Copenhagen must ensure sufficient reductions in emissions and the provision of additional financial, technological and capacity-building support to countries in need.

15. **Mr. Al Nafisee** (Saudi Arabia) said that his delegation was extremely concerned about the global economic and financial crisis, the effects of climate change and global warming, the development challenges facing Africa and population growth. The international community must make a determined effort to address those issues. The achievement of development and the eradication of poverty were a moral and humanitarian responsibility. The establishment of a global economic balance and a solid foundation for economic development could be achieved only through collective efforts based on a sense of shared responsibility. Efforts to reform the international financial, monetary and trade systems should take place through existing institutions and should avoid proposals that did not enjoy consensus. At the same time, developing and least developed countries must support each other and be more united if they were successfully to address the obstacles that prevented them from achieving their development objectives and maximizing their role in the global economy. Developing countries must be allowed to join the World Trade Organization (WTO) on a fair basis and to export their products duty-free.

16. The United Nations, in particular the Economic and Social Council, played a pivotal role in supporting international cooperation, in achieving the internationally agreed development goals and in ensuring that developing countries could benefit from development programmes and play a greater role in global discussions about funding and funding mechanisms. Priority must be given to achieving economic development, to establishing social stability and to addressing environmental and population-related problems, and all three pillars of sustainable development must be implemented.

17. The adoption by some industrialized countries of selective climate-change policies was a matter of concern. Moving away from fossil fuels was unfeasible and impractical, particularly in view of the availability of carbon dioxide storage technology and clean fossil fuel technology. Rather than moving away from fossil fuels, the backbone of the global economy, Member States should make more extensive use of the technologies available.

18. As a signatory of the international environmental conventions, including the Kyoto Protocol, Saudi Arabia participated actively in global efforts to protect the environment, within the principles governing joint

international activity, and contributed to such efforts by investing in solar technology and wind energy production. The international community must adopt measures that both protected the environment and contributed to global economic growth. Ongoing improvements in the technologies of energy use would be key in addressing the many environmental problems facing the world today. Efforts to combat climate change must be based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. If it was to achieve concrete results, the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the fifth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, to be held in Copenhagen in December 2009, must benefit from the active participation and contribution of all countries. His delegation looked forward to the adoption of an international agreement on greenhouse gas emissions that went beyond 2012.

19. Globalization should be a matter not only of opening markets, but also of expanding opportunities for all. The purpose of globalization must be to improve people's quality of life, to eradicate poverty and disease, to end ignorance and to facilitate technology transfer to developing countries, which, in return, were responsible for creating an environment conducive to development by activating market economy mechanisms and by granting a primary role to the private sector.

20. His delegation attached great importance to follow-up to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. Saudi Arabia had already met several of the Goals and was on track to achieve several others before 2015.

21. **Mr. Bodini** (San Marino) said that the many pressing issues facing the Committee were overshadowed by the global economic and financial crisis, which the General Assembly must address as a priority. San Marino had been severely affected by the crisis. Unemployment was increasing, its savings were disappearing and its dreams of social stability were vanishing.

22. While the efforts of the G-20 to stem the crisis were welcome, it was the responsibility of the United Nations to devise a long-term plan to address the problem, which could be resolved neither with a short-term fix nor with solutions that satisfied few at the expense of many. The General Assembly must find an effective response based on a balanced compromise that accommodated the aspirations of all nations and the basic economic rights of all citizens.

23. It could not be left to a few — and especially not to the technocrats and practitioners who had allowed the crisis to happen in the first place — to address the root causes of the crisis or to reform the international financial structure. Rather, a constructive, informed, political debate should take place in the General Assembly. That debate should not be hijacked by extreme or radical ideas, but should be conducted with a sense of common responsibility with the aim of devising a lasting and equitable world economic plan blessed by the universal legitimacy of the United Nations.

24. **Mr. Macheve** (Mozambique) said that his Government was committed to participating in international efforts to address the challenges facing the world today. Together, the economic and financial crisis, climate change, and volatile food and oil prices threatened to undermine efforts to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. The challenges posed by climate change were a particular concern for Mozambique, owing to its geographical location, agro-climatic conditions and vulnerability to cyclical natural disasters, with the serious human, material, social, economic and environmental consequences they entailed.

25. As it prepared for the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly to be held in September 2010 to review the progress made on the Millennium Development Goals, the international community must redouble its efforts to attain those Goals by 2015. His delegation was confident that the current reforms would result in a more relevant United Nations that could contribute more effectively to such efforts. It attached great importance to the outcomes of the deliberations on operational activities for development of the United Nations system.

26. As a least developed country itself, Mozambique was keenly interested in ways to overcoming the challenges facing those countries. It looked to the international community to create an effective framework for addressing the impact of the economic and financial crisis on the most vulnerable countries. The least developed countries should be assisted in

developing their national capacity to respond to food and energy crises and natural disasters and in improving their national warning systems. To help countries face the challenge of climate change, international support should be given to the creation of a national adaptation programme of action. He commended world leaders for the resolve they had demonstrated at the Summit on Climate Change, held in New York in September 2009. The significant pledges they had made could push negotiations towards a global deal at the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference in December 2009. He hoped that the strong political message delivered in New York would be translated into a global green new deal in Copenhagen.

27. The problems facing today's world were intrinsically linked. For that reason, the Committee should continue to focus on the United Nations development agenda. The United Nations played an important role in coordinating international efforts to address humanitarian issues relating to natural disasters. Hence the urgent need to accelerate efforts to make the United Nations more effective, efficient and coherent and, therefore, more responsive to the development needs of developing countries.

28. It was equally necessary to reform the international economic and financial system and architecture so that it met twenty-first-century needs. The governance structure for international cooperation should be unique and inclusive, and should give a voice to rich and poor countries alike. The ultimate goal of such reform should be to restore global economic confidence and to achieve sustainable development for all countries and all peoples. As one of the pilot countries of the "Delivering as One" initiative, Mozambique was fully committed to United Nations system reform at the country level.

29. *Mr. Mohamed Cherif Diallo (Guinea), Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.*

30. **Mr. Milanović** (Serbia) said that 2009 had been a very difficult year. Much of the progress made on the Millennium Development Goals was in danger of being reversed. As the ones with most influence on the international financial and trading system, the major economies bore particular responsibility for ensuring the stability of the system as a whole and, through the G-20, would have the biggest say in discussions about the global economy. Developing countries wanted a transparent economic system free from market speculation and extreme fluctuations in commodity and agricultural prices, and to have their voice heard in the context of the G-20. Protectionism, which jeopardized the achievements of recent decades, must be avoided.

31. While good governance was undoubtedly important for development, ODA was an important supplement, particularly in times of crisis. The Millennium Development Goals would not be attained unless developing countries received adequate support. Particular attention should be paid to countries emerging from conflict.

32. Serbia's GDP growth rate had been high for seven years, averaging 6.2 per cent for the past three years. In the first quarter of 2009, however, it had dropped to -3.5 per cent compared to the first quarter of 2008. It was projected to decline even further by the end of the year. Fortunately, the crisis had taken more time to hit Serbia owing to banking system reforms and a strict monetary policy.

33. In the first seven months of 2009, both exports and imports had fallen compared to the same period in 2008. At the same time, imports had exceeded exports by 52 per cent, a higher figure than for 2008.

34. The main challenge facing his Government was the high rate of unemployment, which had risen from 14.7 per cent in October 2008 to 16.4 per cent in April 2009. It would be difficult for Serbia to create jobs, however, owing to the commitment it had made to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to streamline the State and local administrations. The Global Jobs Pact recently adopted by the International Labour Organization (ILO) was therefore welcome.

35. The economic crisis should not prevent agreement from being reached in Copenhagen. Climate change negotiations must be meaningful and all parties must show a readiness to address the issue. A broad consensus was needed; no one should be excused. While developed countries were required to make bold commitments, developing countries must assume their share of the burden too. That said, they must not be punished for not being developed. Adequate financial support and unencumbered green technology transfer were therefore essential. Unilateral actions that introduced taxes for certain non-green products from developing countries were unwelcome. The only way to address climate change was through a broad consensus.

36. Food security was another important issue. Today, there were 1 billion hungry people in the world. The economic crisis and changing weather patterns threatened to exacerbate the problem. Food aid was no longer enough. The problem would be solved only through a comprehensive approach that promoted sustainable agricultural development.

37. Lastly, the Committee played a key role in building global consensus on such issues as the economy, climate change and development and should serve as a link between the G-20 and the rest of the United Nations membership.

38. **Mr. Rugunda** (Uganda) said that many of the most vulnerable countries had not yet emerged from the food security and energy crises at a time when the world faced even greater challenges, including the global financial and economic downturn, climate change and the influenza A (H1N1) pandemic. Rising economic and environmental insecurity was seriously diminishing many developing countries' hopes of achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, while the various global crises had exposed weaknesses in the current global system. The international community's failure, until recently, to find a solution to the global economic and financial crisis highlighted the serious gaps in multilateralism and the need to reform multilateral systems, including the international financial institutions and the United Nations itself.

39. At the same time, it was important not to overlook such other key priorities as poverty reduction and sustainable development. The Committee should focus on global action to accelerate progress in those areas, giving top priority to the fulfilment of commitments relating to the financing of sustainable development. It must deliver concrete guidance to the General Assembly in that regard.

40. Uganda was working hard to meet its development commitments. It had implemented national strategies for attaining the Millennium Development Goals and had prioritized funding for infrastructure development, energy, universal primary and secondary education, and health care. Its economy had been fairly resilient and its GDP was projected to grow by 7 per cent in 2009-2010. Like most of the least developed countries, however, it was severely constrained by a lack of development resources owing to a decline in income from trade, tourism and remittances and a lower level of ODA and foreign direct investment (FDI). The efforts of the least developed countries required effective international support. Adequate attention must be paid to issues relating to poverty eradication and sustainable development, including international trade and investment, debt relief, ODA, and finance and technology transfer for climate change adaptation. In view of the current multiple crises, the Committee should pay particular attention to countries in special situations. Since South-South cooperation was an important complement to North-South and triangular cooperation, his Government was looking forward to the High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation, to be held in Nairobi in December 2009.

41. Following the collapse of the Doha Development Round, more and more countries were threatening to introduce climate change-related trade protectionism. Developing countries would lose twice if such threats were carried out. The adoption of unilateral trade measures that blocked or restricted developing country exports on climate change-related grounds violated WTO provisions and should therefore be prohibited. His delegation looked forward to reviewing the issue further in the context of WTO guidelines. In its view, the upcoming Copenhagen Climate Change Conference provided the best — and perhaps the last — chance of saving humanity from a global catastrophe.

42. **Mr. Loulichki** (Morocco) said that, in such a time of multiple global crises, the United Nations was best placed to take account of the interests of all States, regardless of their level of development. The Outcome of the United Nations Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development, held in New York in June 2009, provided the clearest expression yet of international efforts to address the crisis.

43. The financial crisis continued to impact negatively on the economic performance of developing countries and, therefore, on their social situation and political stability. Projections for 2009 showed that, despite a number of positive signs, the recovery remained fragile and economic growth would continue its downward trend. Global unemployment, meanwhile, was expected to rise by between 40 million and 60 million in 2009. To mitigate the impact of the crisis on their economies, developing countries needed to mobilize considerable financial resources. However,

the very sectors that were considered their primary source of income had been hit hard by the crisis. Developing countries were therefore unable to implement policies to kick start their economies or to help them attain the Millennium Development Goals. For such countries, ODA was the only source of financing. Hence the importance of developed countries meeting their ODA commitments.

44. According to the Millennium Development Goals Report 2009, an estimated 55 million to 90 million more people than anticipated would be living in extreme poverty in 2009. The many international meetings on the subject had failed to generate the momentum needed for the Goals to be attained by 2015. Actions to promote the attainment of the Goals must be an integral part of efforts to relaunch economic growth. The high-level meeting of the General Assembly to be held in September 2010 would provide an opportunity for specific measures to be taken to help countries lagging behind the most to attain their development goals.

45. African countries had worked hard to address the crisis and to maintain their growth. Most, however, lagged behind in development. Africa was expected to record only 2 per cent growth in 2009, compared to an average of 6 per cent between 2004 and 2008. According to the Economic Report on Africa 2009 of the Economic Commission for Africa, progress towards meeting the targets of the Millennium Development Goals had been mixed, with some noticeable gains in universal education but very limited headway on poverty and hunger eradication and on most of the health-related Goals. In addition, the continent had fewer and fewer resources for development. ODA granted to Africa was not enough for it to meet its development objectives. To prevent the situation from deteriorating further, the international community must honour its commitments towards, and mobilize more resources for, Africa. In that connection, his delegation welcomed the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report on Africa's development needs: state of implementation of various commitments, challenges and the way forward (A/64/208).

46. His Government attached great importance to the issue of food security. The World Summit on Food Security, to be held in Rome in November 2009, should address the structural causes of food insecurity and adopt urgent measures for countries facing food shortages.

47. South-South cooperation -- which should be strengthened and supported by the entire international community -- should complement, not replace, North-South cooperation. His delegation hoped that the upcoming High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation would place such cooperation at the heart of global efforts to address the effects of the crisis. Interregional partnerships should also be strengthened.

48. The huge climatic changes that the world was currently experiencing would have an irreversible impact on the Earth's ecosystem. The upcoming Copenhagen Climate Change Conference provided a historic opportunity for all humanity to correct that trend. He called for a new climate change agreement that reaffirmed the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and reflected the international community's commitment to strengthen mitigation and adaptation measures in developing countries by mobilizing new, predictable and sustainable financial resources and through capacity-building and technology transfer.

49. According to WTO, international trade would decrease by 10 per cent in 2009. That the economic and financial crisis had hit developing country exports hardest highlighted both the fragility of their trading systems and their vulnerability to such crises. The interests of developing countries must be given due consideration in the Doha Round of trade negotiations. Lastly, his delegation was convinced that the United Nations must remain at the heart of efforts to solve the various global crises and hoped that the Committee's work would help forge the consensus needed.

50. **Ms. Ochir** (Mongolia) said that the food, fuel and financial crises constituted a development emergency. Work to establish an effective early warning system to develop resilience to future crises should continue, and in that regard she welcomed the establishment of the Global Impact and Vulnerability Alert System.

51. The Government of Mongolia had been instrumental in establishing an international think-tank of landlocked developing countries to enhance the analytical capability of those countries and coordinate efforts to implement the Almaty Programme of Action on the new global framework for transit transport cooperation for landlocked and transit developing

countries and to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. It had been launched in July 2009 by the Secretary-General and the Foreign Minister of Mongolia.

52. The G-20 framework must be more inclusive and should set up a formal relationship with the United Nations. The resolve of the G-20 to fight protectionism was welcome, as was its commitment to the successful conclusion of the Doha Round by 2010.

53. Prior to the crisis, Mongolia's GDP had been growing at a rate of over 9 per cent per year. Approximately two thirds of the Millennium Development Goal targets had been met in Mongolia. However, the goals of halving poverty and ensuring environmental sustainability remained challenging. A national plan of action to overcome the financial crisis had been approved by the Parliament and included measures to stimulate the economy using market mechanisms, protect the vulnerable from the impact of the crisis, and improve food supply. The Government's goal was to achieve self-sufficiency in major foodstuffs by 2010. Recently, it had adopted a programme that would focus on intensive development of the mining industry, agriculture and manufacturing based on local raw materials.

54. **Mr. Matenje** (Malawi) said that the Millennium Development Goals could be achieved only if donor countries met their commitments. However, commitments had stalled since the International Conference on Financing for Development, held in 2002 in Monterrey, Mexico, and, as a result, many developing countries were off track in meeting their Millennium Development Goals. With only six years left before the target date, there was no time to lose. Obstacles limiting progress must be addressed.

55. Malawi had rapidly gone from being a food-deficit nation to being a food-surplus nation and a food exporter. However, climate change would cause major setbacks to agriculture and food production. There must be support for scientific research and the development of appropriate technologies to combat its effects, and research results must be shared with developing countries.

56. Landlocked countries had particular challenges, paying on average almost three times more for transportation than other countries. With its neighbour Mozambique, Malawi was exploring the possibility of opening an inland water channel to the Indian Ocean to facilitate access to trade in the subregion.

57. **Mr. Dao** (Mali) said that his country had implemented a development framework focused in part on agriculture. That sector had been hit hard by flooding, drought and other natural disasters related to climate change.

58. The Committee should pay particular attention to developing countries. Those countries, especially the poorest ones, should be involved in the process of setting up mechanisms governing development and development financing. Thoroughgoing reform of the international financial architecture was called for to allow poor countries to participate in decision-making.

59. **Mr. Pak** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that the economic crisis was the result of mistaken policies pursued by the developed countries, particularly the United States of America. Developing countries were suffering the most from the current crisis, which threatened progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

60. A new economic order must be established that put all countries on an equal footing. Global reform must be approached from the perspective of the developing countries. International and regional meetings on the financial crisis had resulted in limited measures aimed at the recovery of financial markets in a few countries, while overlooking the interests of developing countries.

61. The current international financial system was an obstacle to the interests and rights of developing countries. The protectionist policies pursued by developed countries limited access to markets by developing countries and barred their access to preferential and equitable benefits. Recent moves to formulate a unified policy to review international development policy without taking note of the specific conditions of individual countries were a source of concern in the developing world.

62. In combating climate change, it was important to adhere to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. At the upcoming Copenhagen Conference, measures should be taken to promote the preferential transfer of environment-friendly technology to developing countries.

63. The Special Unit for South-South Cooperation should step up efforts to strengthen the national

capacities of developing countries and to provide new momentum for South-South cooperation. The People's Democratic Republic of Korea welcomed the adoption by the General Assembly of the resolution on a United Nations conference on South-South cooperation, to be held in Nairobi in December 2009.

64. **Mr. García González** (El Salvador) said that his delegation welcomed the international community's efforts to address the global economic and financial crisis. It too was concerned about the ensuing global recession. For developing countries, the negative effects of the crisis included a greater struggle in attaining the Millennium Development Goals; an increase in poverty, unemployment and underemployment; and a decrease in remittances and investment.

65. His Government had implemented a $587.5 million programme designed to mitigate the negative effects of the crisis through, inter alia, a significant increase in investment in social development programmes; the creation of a social protection system; the provision of education grants and of basic pensions for the elderly; and the creation of a development bank. It had also created an Economic and Social Council with a view to promoting national dialogue on public policies and thereby designing a socially inclusive development strategy based on transparency, participation and accountability.

66. International cooperation was key to economic recovery and growth as it increased opportunities for South-South cooperation at the regional and subregional levels. His delegation therefore looked forward to the upcoming High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation.

67. El Salvador was committed to fulfilling its commitments both under the Doha Declaration on Financing for Development, adopted in 2008 at the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus, and under the Outcome of the recent United Nations Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development. His delegation intended to participate actively in the work of the ad hoc open-ended working group of the General Assembly established to follow up on the issues contained in that Outcome.

68. His delegation supported efforts to reform global economic governance structures to ensure that global issues were addressed in a more effective and coordinated manner. The main focus of such reform should be to give developing countries more of a say in economic matters and strengthen their participation in the Bretton Woods institutions.

69. Even though the crisis had caused a dramatic drop in manufacturing exports from Central America, his delegation remained convinced of the importance of trade and investment as engines for development. The crisis had also affected the employment levels and the remittances of Salvadorians living in developed countries, in particular the United States. The human rights of those migrants and their families must be protected, and to that end, a comprehensive and long-term approach to migration was needed. He also joined others in calling for an early and successful conclusion of the Doha Round.

70. His Government would continue to support initiatives aimed at addressing the specific needs of middle-income countries. Ongoing international support was essential if such countries were to consolidate the progress they had made on social development and growth. His delegation would actively support efforts towards the adoption by the Committee of a substantive resolution on development cooperation with middle-income countries.

71. Lastly, his Government attached great importance to efforts to combat climate change and environmental degradation. Member States must prepare for the challenges of a new low-carbon global economy and be willing to integrate environmental protection into their development strategies. For that reason, his Government attached great importance to the intergovernmental negotiations being held in the run-up to the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference. It was important to promote a comprehensive approach to sustainable development based on its three interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars.

72. **Mr. St. Aimee** (Saint Lucia), referring to the Secretary-General's report on development cooperation with middle-income countries (A/64/253), said that, according to the World Bank definition of middle-income country, which classified middle-income countries as those with a per capita gross national income (GNI) of between $976 and $11,905, there were currently 101 middle-income countries. However, that group included countries without armies and countries with the largest armies in the world; nuclear-

status countries and countries that could barely meet their energy bills; and countries with billions of dollars invested overseas and countries drowning in debt. The definition was therefore flawed and should be reviewed.

73. Even though they faced challenges in meeting their people's needs, small island developing States were asked to contribute disproportionately to peacekeeping operations. Small island developing States were peace-loving countries that spent their resources not on arms, but on providing their people with educational, health-care and sporting facilities and with entrepreneurial opportunities. If the United Nations failed to respond to the special needs of such States, the number of least developed countries would increase.

74. After just 30 years of independence and despite enjoying limited natural resources, Saint Lucia had achieved a fairly decent standard of living for its people. It was already feeling the effects of climate change. If a good deal was not reached in Copenhagen, it might face its greatest challenge yet. All his Government asked was that no additional burden be placed on Saint Lucia's shoulders.

75. The issue of assistance to middle-income countries should be revisited. In his delegation's view, middle-income countries with per capita GNI of $3,245 and below should be considered the most deserving. Given the high cost of food, energy and technology acquisition, such countries could hardly be called rich. In fact, it would be difficult to survive at that level, let alone develop.

76. The people of Saint Lucia and of the Caribbean in general were willing to shoulder their responsibilities. However, if they were asked to bear too heavy a burden, both sides would suffer. Member States should work together to make the United Nations a true brotherhood in keeping with the intent of the framers of the Charter. No one could pay what they did not have.

77. Any success achieved by middle-income small island developing States had been by virtue of steady growth through prudent management of limited resources. Such States did not have the capacity to withstand shocks or to introduce stimulus packages. Their best defence in the past had been to avoid shocks and crises, something that was not as easy in today's globalized world. Furthermore, small island developing States did not enjoy the diversity of operations that large economies did. Shocks and crises therefore spelled disaster for them. They had to manage every aspect of life without overly straining the ecosystem. In short, they had very little room for error.

78. Most middle-income small island developing States had met the ecological and development-related challenges facing them. They simply wanted greater understanding from the international community so that they could continue along the path of human development, while protecting their natural heritage.

79. **Ms. Ritola** (Observer for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)) said that the international community faced mounting challenges. Millions of lives were threatened by disease and hunger, and increasing populations were at risk of poverty and natural disasters. In the past few days, several simultaneous extreme weather events had hit Asia, devastating vulnerable communities and testing current disaster-preparedness levels. In Vietnam the Red Cross had helped evacuate over 160,000 people, while in Samoa affected people had found refuge at Red Cross shelters across the country. IFRC was committed to saving lives and to addressing vulnerability. Its national societies and their trained volunteers were always there, on the ground, supporting communities at risk, building resilience and enhancing local response capacities.

80. The ongoing financial and economic crisis was having a disastrous impact on poverty and vulnerability around the world. Social security was threatened and unemployment was on the rise. While there were signs of recovery, some effects of the crisis would become visible only over time. Adding to the mix of urgent humanitarian and development challenges were accelerating climate change, more frequent natural disasters, rapid population growth, urbanization and food insecurity.

81. The combined impacts of those challenges were of serious concern to IFRC. In 2008 alone, over 200 million people had been directly affected by natural disasters. Existing disaster management capacities and funding arrangements were simply not enough to cover growing caseloads. Addressing the needs of an ever-increasing number of vulnerable people required additional funding and a substantial investment in risk reduction.

82. While such challenges were too great for any one Government or organization to tackle effectively, there were solutions. The Hyogo Framework for Action, for example, offered a clear road map for addressing disaster risk. The IFRC Guidelines for the Domestic Facilitation and Regulation of International Disaster Relief and Initial Recovery Assistance, meanwhile, were designed to enable Governments to be better prepared for the legal problems commonly encountered in international relief operations.

83. Indeed, many of climate change's humanitarian consequences could be averted or reduced. Cyclone-preparedness programmes in Bangladesh and Mozambique had saved hundreds of thousands of lives and could be expanded to address the increased risk of heavy storms and floods. Public hygiene campaigns had improved health in villages and cities around the world and could be upgraded to address such climate change-related risks as the spread of dengue and malaria. Other solutions included upgrading care for the elderly during heatwaves, planting trees against landslides and storm surges, and introducing water-saving systems against drought.

84. For those living with disaster risk, the international community must come together and design an innovative climate change agreement in Copenhagen. For those living in poverty, the international community must do more to alleviate their suffering.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.